



STALKE OUT OF SPACE

Morten Nilsson

DANCERS

+

Kristian Devantier

(Project Room)

Stalke Galleri
Vesterbrogade 184

14.01.05 to 04.03.05

It was with great pleasure that Stalke Galleri opened an exhibition of photographs by Morten Nilsson and, in the Project Room, works by Kristian Devantier.

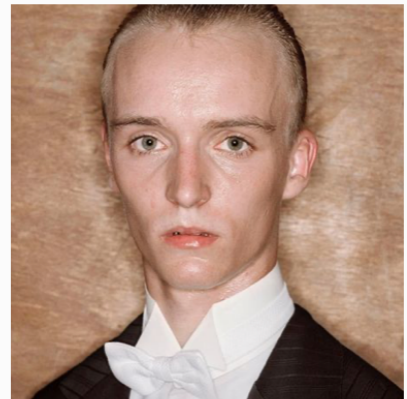
The young Danish photographer Morten Nilsson presented his series *Dancers*, a compelling portrait series of ballroom dancers. The photographs captured the dancers in an intense state between affectation and revelation. Nilsson photographed them immediately after competition—sweating and out of breath—yet still holding their assumed expressions and postures. Their hair shone with pomade, their faces were covered with thick layers of makeup, and their wide-open yet vacant eyes remained lit by effort and concentration. They were still performing their roles as flawless dancers, while their natural faces could be discerned beneath the makeup.

Many of the dancers had barely reached puberty, yet they were dressed as adults in glittering dresses and tight suits. They appeared caught in a moment of transition between childhood and adulthood, wearing low-cut dresses revealing flat chests and little more than a light shade of makeup on their upper lips. The insecurity of youth was evident in their faces and bodies, despite the makeup and costumes. Nilsson captured both their strength and their vulnerability; he depicted the mask while subtly revealing what lay beneath it.

This contrast between the natural and the artificial also characterized Nilsson's photographic practice, which was clearly premeditated yet simultaneously immediate. He did not manipulate the images; instead, he used whatever wall was available as a background, relying solely on the harsh light of his flash. Nilsson's portraits moved extremely close to their subjects, while still maintaining a sense of distance. The dancers almost appeared like mannequins or wax figures—still, close-up representations of a world meant to be seen in motion and from afar. With *Dancers*, Nilsson portrayed a world that reveled in mannerism and stylization, exaggerating a form of glamour closer to Las Vegas than Hollywood, and nearer to kitsch than to culture.

Concurrent with the exhibition at Stalke, the edition was shown in New York and Rotterdam.

In the Project Room, Kristian Devantier exhibited new works on paper. Here, he pursued his seemingly naïve representations; however, the subtle titles made it clear that the works expressed existential reflections on human existence, poetically articulated through the delicate and intimate medium of paper.



Exhibition views and portraits from *Dancers* (2005), showing young ballroom dancers photographed immediately after competition at Stalke Galleri.

Review by Pernille Anker Kristensen (Jyllands-Posten)

In her review, art critic Pernille Anker Kristensen discusses Morten Nilsson's exhibition *Dancers* at Stalke Galleri as a striking and unsettling portrait of young ballroom dancers caught in a transitional state between childhood and adulthood. The photographs depict adolescents immediately after competition, still wearing heavy makeup, formal costumes, and fixed expressions, yet visibly exhausted, sweating, and emotionally exposed.

Kristensen emphasizes the tension between façade and vulnerability that runs through the series. Although the dancers are presented as flawless performers, their insecurity, fragility, and youth remain clearly visible beneath the surface. The images reveal a moment where roles collapse: glamour gives way to uncertainty, and performance to raw humanity.

She notes that Nilsson's photographic method is both controlled and direct. The use of harsh flash, neutral backgrounds, and close framing strips away narrative context and heightens the sense of artificiality. This makes the dancers appear almost mannequin-like, reinforcing the sense that they are performing adulthood before they have fully grown into it.

According to Kristensen, the exhibition operates as a broader reflection on contemporary culture's fascination with stylization, surface, and premature maturity. Nilsson does not judge his subjects but observes them with precision, allowing the images to expose the vulnerability that lies behind ideals of perfection and success.

Overall, Pernille Anker Kristensen presents *Dancers* as a powerful and poignant body of work that captures the fragile moment where identity is still forming, and where the distance between role and reality becomes painfully visible.

Summary based on a review by Pernille Anker Kristensen, Jyllands-Posten.



Kristian Devantier
Project room

